



San Francisco's Solar Founders' Circle

On September 30th, as part of San Francisco's Solar America City Partnership, Mayor Gavin Newsom challenged San Francisco businesses to go solar! Mayor Newsom challenged the city's 1500 largest businesses to install a total of 5 MW of solar within a year. If the goal is met, it will more than double San Francisco's current installed solar generation. As of early November, 75 building owners had accepted the Mayor's challenge, gaining them entrance to the Mayor's Solar Founders' Circle.

Businesses that sign up will receive free energy efficiency audits and solar site assessments from the San Francisco Department of the Environment. The City, with support from its DOE Technical Assistance or "Tiger Team" Lead Andy Walker from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), conducted a training for solar site assessment auditors November 12th – 14th.

These trained auditors will provide businesses with free solar power assessments and energy efficiency audits to identify potential energy and cost savings. The site assessments will help inform businesses of their solar potential as well as estimate installation costs. In addition, the auditors will identify what incentives are available and will demonstrate how a PV system could affect a business's electricity and water-heating bills, and financials. Energy efficiency audits will help businesses identify ways to reduce their energy costs and access energy efficiency rebates.

The Mayor's Solar Founders' Circle is an extension of other big idea programs being promoted throughout the city as part of its GoSolarSF initiative to fully transform the city's infrastructure. In June, the City launched a bold 10-year incentive program that when combined with the current state and federal incentives, significantly lowers the cost of installing a PV system. Commercial installations are eligible for a capacity-based incentive of \$1,500 per kW, up to a maximum amount of \$10,000. Residents can receive up to \$6,000. As part of GoSolarSF's comprehensive program, the highest incentives are available for systems installed by graduates of San Francisco's Workforce Development Program or located in environmental justice districts. Low-income residents can qualify for an additional \$5,000.

With local, state and national incentives, a robust workforce development program and the Mayor's support, San Francisco has all the pieces necessary to be a model solar city.